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## Unit 3: Unified Command

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## Unit 3: Unified Command



**Visual Description:** Unit Introduction

### Key Points

Unified Command involves applying ICS in incidents involving multiple jurisdictions or multiple agencies.



### Unit Objectives

- Define and identify the primary features of Unified Command.
- Describe how Unified Command functions on a multijurisdiction or multiagency incident.
- List the advantages of Unified Command.
- Given a simulated situation, demonstrate roles and reporting relationships under a Unified Command that involves agencies within the same jurisdiction and under multijurisdiction conditions.

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Visual 3.2

**Visual Description:** Unit Objectives

### Key Points

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Define and identify the primary features of Unified Command.
- Describe how Unified Command functions on a multijurisdiction or multiagency incident.
- List the advantages of Unified Command.
- Given a simulated situation, demonstrate roles and reporting relationships under a Unified Command that involves agencies within the same jurisdiction and under multijurisdiction conditions.



### **Background on Unified Command**

**How can you organize for incidents that cross jurisdictional boundaries or exceed individual agency responsibility?**

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Visual 3.3

**Visual Description:** Background on Unified Command

### **Key Points**

Early in the development of ICS, it was recognized that many incidents crossed jurisdictional boundaries or the limits of individual agency functional responsibility.



## Two Solutions

Divide the incident geographically or functionally so that each jurisdiction or agency can establish its own ICS organization.

Create a single ICS incident structure and process that has an effective and responsible multijurisdictional or multiagency approach.

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Visual 3.4

**Visual Description:** Two Solutions

### Key Points

Two solutions were considered for this problem:

1. Divide the incident either geographically or functionally so that each jurisdiction or agency could establish its own ICS organization in a well-defined geographical or functional area of responsibility. This was the simplest political solution, but there were cost and effectiveness reasons why this solution was unacceptable.
2. Create a single ICS incident structure with a built-in process for an effective and responsible multijurisdictional or multiagency approach. This solution became Unified Command.



## Unified Command

- Enables all responsible agencies to manage an incident together by establishing a common set of incident objectives and strategies.
- Allows Incident Commanders to make joint decisions by establishing a single command structure.
- Maintains unity of command. Each employee only reports to one supervisor.



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Visual 3.5

**Visual Description:** Unified Command Organization

### Key Points

The Unified Command organization consists of the Incident Commanders from the various jurisdictions or agencies operating together to form a single command structure. Remember that Unified Command:

- Enables all responsible agencies to manage an incident together by establishing a common set of incident objectives and strategies.
- Allows Incident Commanders to make joint decisions by establishing a single command structure.
- Maintains unity of command. Each employee only reports to one supervisor.

The primary differences between the single command structure and the Unified Command structure are that:

- In a single command structure, the Incident Commander is solely responsible (within the confines of his or her authority) for establishing incident management objectives and strategies. The Incident Commander is directly responsible for ensuring that all functional area activities are directed toward accomplishment of the strategy.
- In a Unified Command structure, the individuals designated by their jurisdictional authorities (or by departments within a single jurisdiction) must jointly determine objectives, strategies, plans, and priorities and work together to execute integrated incident operations and maximize the use of assigned resources.



## Applying Unified Command

**Unified Command is:**

- A collaborative team-effort process.
- Not a new process.



**For years, the U.S. military has used a similar concept to integrate military services in joint operations.**

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Visual 3.6

**Visual Description:** Applying Unified Command

### Key Points

Note that Unified Command:

- Is a collaborative team-effort process.
- Allows all agencies with responsibility for an incident to establish a common set of incident objectives that all can subscribe to.
- Is accomplished without losing or abdicating agency authority, responsibility, or accountability.
- Is not a new process or one that is unique to ICS.

The Incident Commanders within the Unified Command make joint decisions and speak as one voice. If there is a disagreement, it is worked out among the Incident Commanders within the Unified Command.

The exact composition of the Unified Command structure will depend on the location(s) of the incident (i.e., which geographical administrative jurisdictions are involved) and the type of incident (i.e., which functional agencies of the involved jurisdiction(s) are required).

The U.S. military has used a similar concept for integrating military services in joint operations for years.

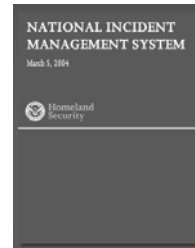




## NIMS and Unified Command

NIMS encourages the use of Unified Command.

**“As a team effort, Unified Command overcomes much of the inefficiency and duplication of effort that can occur when agencies from different functional and geographic jurisdictions, or agencies at different levels of government, operate without a common system or organizational framework.”**



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Visual 3.7

**Visual Description:** NIMS & Unified Command

### Key Points

The National Incident Management System (NIMS) encourages the use of Unified Command when appropriate.

The excerpt on the visual is from this longer quote from the NIMS document:

“Unified Command is an important element in multijurisdictional or multiagency domestic incident management. It provides guidelines to enable agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional responsibilities to coordinate, plan, and interact effectively. As a team effort, Unified Command overcomes much of the inefficiency and duplication of effort that can occur when agencies from different functional and geographic jurisdictions, or agencies at different levels of government, operate without a common system or organizational framework. All agencies with jurisdictional authority or functional responsibility for any or all aspects of an incident and those able to provide specific resource support participate in the Unified Command structure and contribute to the process of determining overall incident strategies; selecting objectives; ensuring that joint planning for tactical activities is accomplished in accordance with approved incident objectives; ensuring the integration of tactical operations; and approving, committing, and making optimum use of all assigned resources.”



### Unified Command: Multiple Jurisdictions

#### Incidents That Impact More Than One Political Jurisdiction

**Example:** A wildland fire starts in one jurisdiction and burns into another jurisdiction. Responding agencies from each jurisdiction have the same mission (fire suppression), and it is the political and/or geographical boundaries that mandate multiagency cooperation and involvement.



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Visual 3.8

**Visual Description:** Unified Command: Multiple Jurisdictions

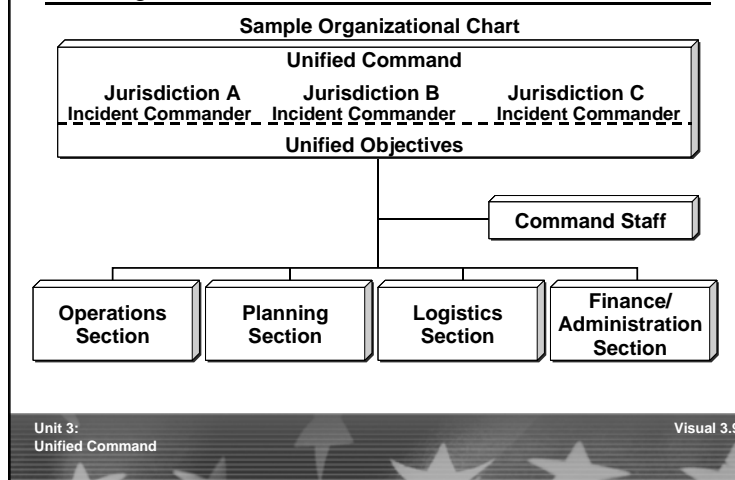
### Key Points

Note the following points:

- Unified Command may be used when incidents impact more than one political jurisdiction.
- An example is a wildland fire starting in one jurisdiction and burning into another jurisdiction. Responding agencies from each jurisdiction have the same mission (fire suppression), and it is the political and/or geographical boundaries that mandate multiagency cooperation and involvement.



## Multijurisdictional Incident



**Visual Description:** Multijurisdictional Incident

### Key Points

The visual presents an example of a Unified Command organization chart for a multijurisdictional incident. The chart includes the following elements:

- **Unified Command:** The Unified Command is composed of the Incident Commanders from the three jurisdictions. The Unified Command establishes a single set of unified objectives.
- **Integrated Command and General Staff:** The organization has integrated Command Staff and Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration Sections.

**Unified Command: Multiple Agencies/Single Jurisdiction****Incidents Involving Multiple Agencies/Departments Within the Same Political Jurisdiction**

**Example:** During a hazardous materials incident, the fire department has responsibility for fire suppression and rescue, the police department has responsibility for evacuation and area security, and public health agencies and others have responsibility for site cleanup.



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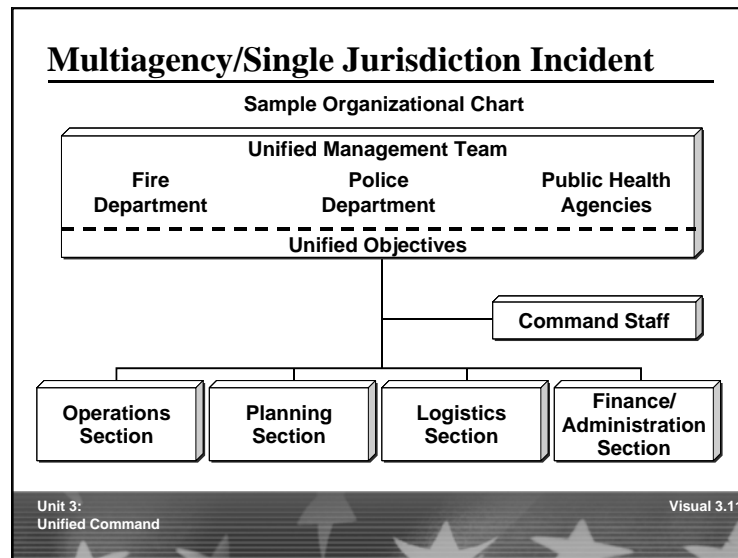
Visual 3.10

**Visual Description:** Unified Command: Multiple Agencies/Single Jurisdiction

**Key Points**

Note the following points:

- Unified Command may also be used when incidents involve multiple agencies or departments within the same political jurisdiction.
- An example is a hazardous materials incident in which the fire department has responsibility for fire suppression and rescue, the police department has responsibility for evacuation and area security, and the public health agencies and others have responsibility for site cleanup.



**Visual Description:** Multiagency/Single Jurisdiction Incident

## Key Points

This visual presents an example of a Unified Command organization chart for a Multiagency/Single Jurisdiction incident. The chart includes the following elements:

- **Unified Command:** The Unified Command is composed of the Incident Commanders from the three departments of the single jurisdiction (fire department, police department, and public health agency). The Unified Command establishes a single set of unified objectives.
- **Integrated Command and General Staff:** The organization has integrated Command Staff and Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration Sections.

**Unified Command: Multiagency/Multijurisdiction**

**Incidents That Impact on (or Involve) Several Political and Functional Agencies**

**Example:** Severe weather, earthquakes, National Special Security Events, and terrorist threats involve large numbers of local, State, and Federal agencies. These incidents of national significance cross political boundaries and involve multiple functional authorities.



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Visual 3.12

**Visual Description:** Unified Command: Multiagency/Multijurisdiction

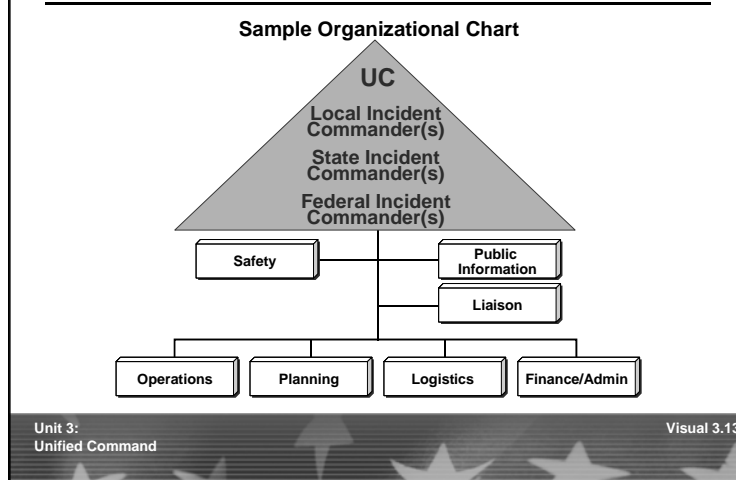
**Key Points**

Note the following points:

- A third instance in which Unified Command may be used involves incidents that impact on or involve several political and functional agencies.
- Examples are severe weather, earthquakes, National Special Security Events, and terrorist threats that involve large numbers of local, State, and Federal agencies. These incidents of national significance cross political boundaries and involve multiple functional authorities.



## Multiagency/Multijurisdiction Incident



**Visual Description:** Multiagency/Multijurisdiction Incident

### Key Points

This visual presents an example of a Unified Command organization chart for a multiagency/multijurisdiction incident. The chart includes the following elements:

- **Unified Command:** Incident Commanders from local, State, and Federal agencies comprise the Unified Command and share responsibility for incident management.
- **Integrated Command and General Staff:** The organization has integrated Command Staff (including Safety, Public Information, and Liaison functions) and Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration Sections.

This type of Unified Command would be established for complex incidents where the State and Federal government agencies have jurisdiction.



### Unified Command Elements (1 of 2)

- **Policies, Objectives, Strategies:** Are established jointly by each jurisdiction/agency authority in advance of tactical operations.
- **Organization:** Consists of the various jurisdictional or agency on-scene senior representatives (agency Incident Commanders) operating within a Unified Command structure.
- **Resources:** Are supplied by the jurisdictions and agencies that have functional or jurisdictional responsibility.

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Visual 3.14

**Visual Description:** Unified Command Elements (1 of 2)

### Key Points

There are four elements to consider when applying Unified Command:

- Policies, Objectives, and Strategies
- Organization
- Resources
- Operations

As a further explanation of these elements, read the following:

- Policies, objectives, and strategies are established jointly by each jurisdiction/agency authority in advance of tactical operations.
- Organization consists of the various jurisdictional or agency on-scene senior representatives (agency Incident Commanders) operating within a Unified Command structure.
- Resources are supplied by the jurisdictions and agencies that have functional or jurisdictional responsibility.

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### Unified Command Elements (2 of 2)

- **Operations:** Are directed by one person, the Operations Section Chief, who controls tactical resources. There is still unity of command.

Resources (personnel and equipment) stay under the administrative and policy control of their agencies. Operationally, they respond to mission assignments under the coordination and direction of the Operations Section Chief.

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Visual 3.15

**Visual Description:** Unified Command Elements (2 of 2)

### Key Points

In a Unified Command only one person, the Operations Section Chief, controls tactical resources and directs incident operations. Within the operations there is unity of command.

Resources (personnel and equipment) stay under the administrative and policy control of their agencies. Operationally, personnel respond to mission assignments under the coordination and direction of the Operations Section Chief.



### **Unified Command Features: Overview**

- A single integrated incident organization
- Collocated (shared) facilities
- Single planning process and Incident Action Plan
- Integrated General Staff
- Coordinated process for resource ordering



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Visual 3.16

**Visual Description:** Unified Command Features: Overview

### **Key Points**

There are five primary features of a Unified Command Organization:

- A Single Integrated Incident Organization
- Collocated (Shared) Facilities
- A Single Planning Process and Incident Action Plan (IAP)
- Shared Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration Sections
- A Coordinated Process for Resource Ordering



### **Single Integrated Incident Organization**

#### **In a Unified Command:**

- Jurisdictions and/or agencies blend into an integrated, unified team.
- The mix of participants depends on location of the incident and kind of incident.
- The members must function together as a team.



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Visual 3.17

**Visual Description:** Single Integrated Incident Organization

### **Key Points**

The first primary feature of Unified Command is a single integrated incident organization:

- Under Unified Command, the various jurisdictions and/or agencies are blended together into an integrated, unified team.
- The resulting organization may be a mix of personnel from several jurisdictions or agencies, each performing functions as appropriate and working toward a common set of objectives.
- The proper mix of participants may depend on:
  - Location of the incident, which often determines the jurisdictions that must be involved.
  - Kind of incident, which dictates the functional agencies of the involved jurisdictions, as well as other agencies that may be involved. In a multijurisdictional situation, a Unified Command structure could consist of one responsible official from each jurisdiction. In other cases, Unified Command may consist of several functional department managers or assigned representatives from within a single political jurisdiction.
- Because of common ICS organization and terminology, personnel from other jurisdictions or agencies can easily be integrated into a single organization.



### **Building Teamwork**

**How can you build the  
teamwork necessary for  
Unified Command?**

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Visual 3.18

**Visual Description:** Building Teamwork

### **Key Points**

Answer the following question:



**How can you build the teamwork necessary for Unified Command?**



### Collocated (Shared) Facilities

By bringing the responsible officials, Command Staffs, and planning elements together in a single Incident Command Post, a coordinated effort can be maintained.



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Visual 3.19

**Visual Description:** Collocated (Shared) Facilities

### Key Points

The second feature of Unified Command is collocated, or shared, facilities.

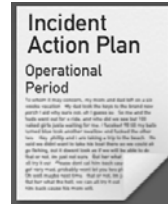
Note the following key points:

- Bringing the responsible officials, Command Staffs, and planning elements together in a single Incident Command Post can promote coordination.
- Establishing one Base can serve the needs of multiple agencies.
- Using one Staging Area can be more efficient.



## Single Planning Process and IAP

- Joint planning must be initiated as soon as two or more agencies form a Unified Command.
- This planning process results in a single Incident Action Plan (IAP) that addresses multijurisdiction or multiagency priorities and specifies tactical operations and resource assignments.



The planning process will be covered in Unit 6.

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Visual 3.20

**Visual Description:** Single Planning Process and IAP

### Key Points

The third feature of Unified Command is a single planning process and Incident Action Plan (IAP).

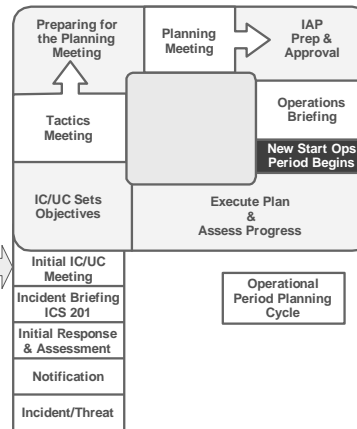
The planning process for Unified Command is similar to that used on a single jurisdiction or agency incident.



## Planning “P” and Unified Command

The Planning “P” illustrates operational period planning process.

After the initial response and assessment, the Unified Command meet to set the incident objectives for the next operational period.



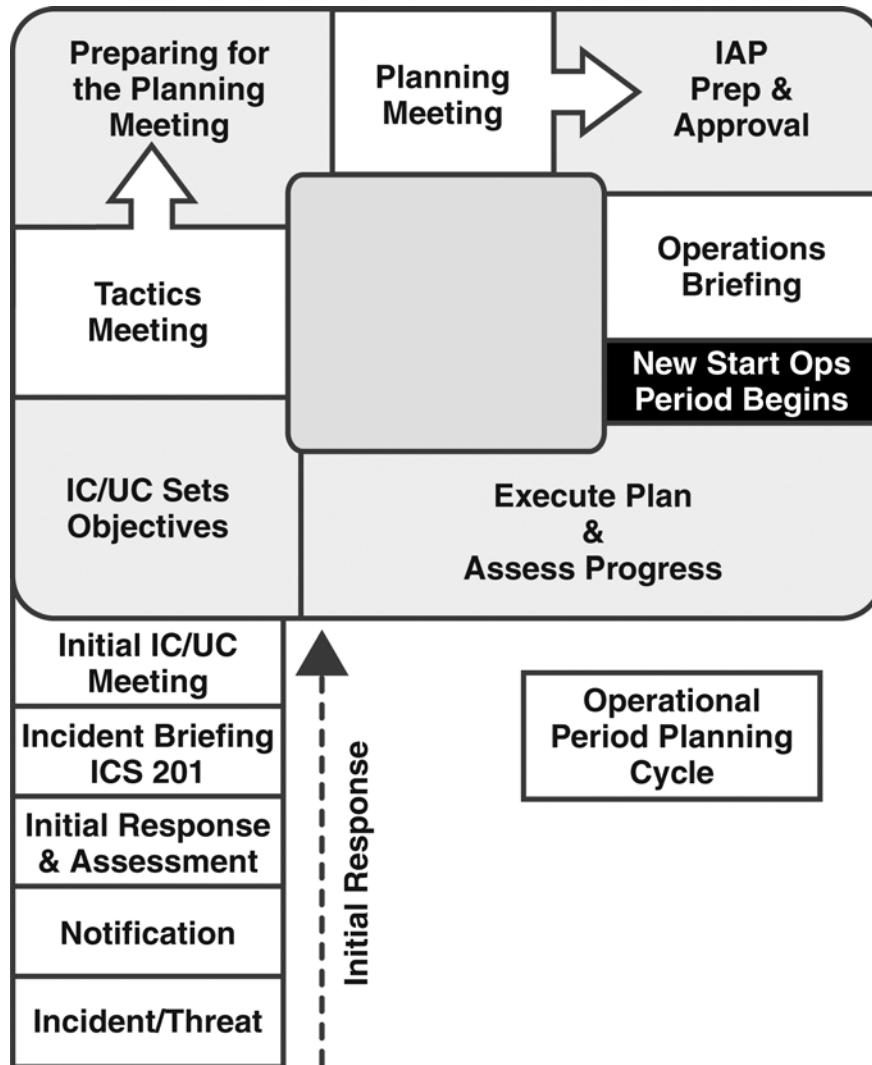
**Visual Description:** Planning “P” and Unified Command

### Key Points

Note the following key points:

- The Planning “P” illustrates the process and steps involved in planning for an incident, from the onset of the incident (shown in the “leg” of the “P”) through preparations for the first operations period (shown in the “top” of the “P”).
- The planning cycle then continues for each successive operations period, as shown in the circular part of the “P”.
- As illustrated on the visual the Unified Command conduct an initial Unified Command meeting early in the incident response. Then the Unified Commanders jointly establish objectives for each operations period.

Refer to the larger version of this graphic on the following page.



**Caption:** The Planning “P” illustrates the incident planning process.

- The leg of the “P” describes the initial response period: Once the incident/threat begins, the steps are Notification, Initial Response & Assessment, Incident Briefing (ICS 201), and Initial Incident Command/Unified Command Meeting.
- At the top of the leg of the “P” is the beginning of the first operational planning period cycle. In this circular sequence, the steps are IC/UC Sets Objectives, Tactics Meeting, Preparing for the Planning Meeting, Planning Meeting, IAP Prep & Approval, and Operations Briefing.
- At this point a new operations period begins. The next step is Execute Plan & Assess Progress, after which the cycle begins again.





### Command Meeting

**The command meeting:**

- Includes all members of the Unified Command.
- Takes place before the first operational period planning meeting.
- Provides the responsible agency officials with an opportunity to discuss and concur on important issues prior to joint incident planning.

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Visual 3.22

**Visual Description:** Command Meeting

### Key Points

An important aspect of planning under Unified Command is the need for all jurisdictional or functional agency Incident Commanders to participate in a command meeting early in the incident response.

The command meeting provides the responsible agency officials with an opportunity to discuss and concur on important issues prior to joint incident planning.

Requirements for the command meeting include:

- The command meeting should include only agency Incident Commanders.
- The meeting should be brief, and important points should be documented.
- Prior to the meeting, the respective responsible officials should have reviewed the purposes and agenda items and be prepared to discuss them.



### Command Meeting Agenda (1 of 2)

- Statement of specific jurisdictional/agency goals, based on the following overarching priorities:
  - #1: Life Saving
  - #2: Incident Stabilization
  - #3: Property Preservation
- Presentation of jurisdictional limitations, concerns, and restrictions
- Development of a collective set of incident objectives
- Establishment and agreement on acceptable priorities
- Adoption of an overall strategy or strategies to accomplish objectives

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Visual 3.23

**Visual Description:** Command Meeting Agenda (1 of 2)

### Key Points

The agenda for the command meeting should include the following:

- Statement of specific jurisdictional/agency goals, based on the following overarching priorities:
  - #1: Life Saving
  - #2: Incident Stabilization
  - #3: Property Preservation
- Presentation of jurisdictional limitations, concerns, and restrictions
- Development of a collective set of incident objectives
- Establishment and agreement on acceptable priorities
- Adoption of an overall strategy or strategies to accomplish objectives

(Continued on next page.)



### Command Meeting Agenda (2 of 2)

- Agreement on the basic organization structure
- Designation of the best qualified and acceptable Operations Section Chief
- Agreement on General Staff personnel designations
- Agreement on planning, logistical, and finance agreements and procedures
- Agreement on the resource ordering process to be followed
- Agreement on cost-sharing procedures
- Agreement on informational matters
- Designation of one agency official to act as the Unified Command spokesperson

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Visual 3.24

**Visual Description:** Command Meeting

### Key Points

Additional agenda items include:

- Agreement on the basic organization structure
- Designation of the best qualified and acceptable Operations Section Chief
- Agreement on General Staff personnel designations
- Agreement on planning, logistical, and finance agreements and procedures
- Agreement on the resource ordering process to be followed
- Agreement on cost-sharing procedures
- Agreement on informational matters
- Designation of one agency official to act as the Unified Command spokesperson



### Shared General Staff Sections

Integrating multijurisdictional and/or multiagency personnel into various other functional areas may be beneficial. For example:

- In Operations and Planning, Deputy Section Chiefs can be designated from an adjacent jurisdiction.
- In Logistics, a Deputy Logistics Section Chief from another agency or jurisdiction can help to coordinate incident support.

Are there more examples?

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Visual 3.25

**Visual Description:** Shared General Staff Sections

### Key Points

The fourth feature of Unified Command is shared Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration Sections. The benefits of sharing these General Staff components include:

- The Unified Command incident organization can benefit by integrating multijurisdictional and/or multiagency personnel into various other functional areas.
- Integrating other agency personnel into an organization can be equally beneficial in a single incident command situation.

#### Examples:

- In Operations and Planning, Deputy Section Chiefs can be designated from an adjacent jurisdiction, which may in future operational periods have the primary responsibility for these functions. By placing other agency's personnel in the Planning Section's Situation, Resources, and Demobilization Units, there can be significant savings in personnel, and increased communication and information sharing.
- In Logistics, a deputy Logistics Section Chief from another agency or jurisdiction can help to coordinate incident support as well as facilitate resource ordering activities. Placing other agencies' personnel into the Communications Unit helps in developing a single incident-wide communications plan.
- Although the Finance/Administration Section often has detailed agency-specific procedures to follow, cost savings may be realized through agreements on cost sharing for essential services. For example, one agency might provide food services, another fuel, another security, etc.



### Integrated General Staff

- Incident Commanders within the Unified Command must concur on the selection of the General Staff Section Chiefs.
- The Operations Section Chief must have full authority to implement the tactics within the IAP.



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Visual 3.26

**Visual Description:** Integrated General Staff

### Key Points

Additional considerations for having an integrated General Staff include:

- Incident Commanders within the Unified Command must concur on the selection of the General Staff Section Chiefs.
- The Operations Section Chief must have full authority to implement the tactics within the Incident Action Plan (IAP).



### Selection of the Ops Section Chief

What should be considered when selecting the Ops Section Chief in a Unified Command?

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Unified Command

Visual 3.27

**Visual Description:** Selection of the Operations Section Chief

### Key Points

Answer the following question:



What should be considered when selecting the Operations Section Chief in a Unified Command?



### Coordinated Resource Ordering

The Incident Commanders within the Unified Command work together to establish resource ordering procedures that allow for:

- Deployment of scarce resources to meet high-priority objectives.
- Potential cost savings through agreements on cost sharing for essential services.



Unit 3:  
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Visual 3.28

**Visual Description:** Coordinated Resource Ordering

### Key Points

The fifth feature of Unified Command is coordinated resource ordering.

- An important advantage of Unified Command is advance establishment of resource ordering procedures. These decisions are made during the command meeting.
- The Planning Meeting will determine resource requirements for all levels of the organization. However, the nature and location of the incident will, to some extent, dictate the most effective off-incident resource ordering process.
- The resource requirements established at the planning meeting are given to the Logistics Section, which then creates a resource order that is transmitted to one agency's dispatch center to be filled.
- Some situations may require resource orders to be made to different agencies from the incident. Multiple resource orders are generally less desirable than the use of a single resource order, and should be avoided when possible.
- If the incident is operating under Unified Command, specific kinds and types of resources to be supplied by certain jurisdictions or agencies may be predesignated as a part of the resource order. This will depend upon the prior commitments of the responsible agency officials in the Unified Command meeting. If this information is not known in advance, then it will be up to the individual agency dispatch center receiving the resource order to fill the order based on closest available resources.



### Incident Commander Responsibilities

Each designated agency Incident Commander functioning in a Unified Command must:

- Act within his/her jurisdictional or agency limitations.
- Inform the other Commanders of any legal, political, jurisdictional, or safety restrictions.
- Be authorized to perform certain activities and actions on behalf of the jurisdiction or agency he/she represents.
- Manage the incident to the best of his/her abilities.

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Visual 3.29

**Visual Description:** Incident Commander Responsibilities

### Key Points

Individually and collectively, the designated agency Incident Commanders functioning in a Unified Command must:

- Be clear on their jurisdictional or agency limitations. Any legal, political, jurisdictional, or safety restrictions must be identified and made known to all.
- Be authorized to perform certain activities and actions on behalf of the jurisdiction or agency they represent. These actions could include:
  - Ordering of additional resources in support of the Incident Action Plan.
  - The possible loaning or sharing of resources to other jurisdictions.
  - Agreeing to financial cost-sharing arrangements with participating agencies.

Note that the Unified Command has the responsibility to manage the incident to the best of its abilities. These responsibilities include:

- Working closely with the other Incident Commanders in the Unified Command.
- Providing sufficient qualified staff and resources.
- Anticipating and resolving problems.
- Delegating authority as needed.
- Inspecting and evaluating performance.
- Communicating with their own agency on priorities, plans, problems, and progress.

(Continued on next page.)



- The members of the Unified Command must function together as a team. They must ensure that effective coordination takes place. In many ways, this is the most important function they perform in Unified Command. There are two distinct levels of coordination:
  - Coordination with other members of the Unified Command team. It is essential that all participants be kept mutually informed, involved, and consulted.
  - Coordination with higher authorities, agency executive or administrators, etc. It is important to keep their respective authorities well informed and confident that the incident is being competently managed.



## Spokesperson Designation

One of the Incident Commanders may be designated as the spokesperson.  
The spokesperson:

- Serves as a designated channel of communications from Command and General Staff members into the Unified Command.
- Does NOT make independent command decisions, but does provide a point of contact as necessary for the Command and General Staffs.



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Visual 3.30

**Visual Description:** Spokesperson Designation

### Key Points

One of the Incident Commanders may be designated as the spokesperson. Remember that this was one of the items included in the agenda for the command meeting.

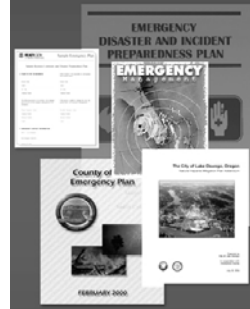
The spokesperson:

- Serves as a designated channel of communications from Command and General Staff members into the Unified Command.
- Does not make independent command decisions, but does provide a point of contact as necessary for the Command and General Staffs.



### Unified Command and Preparedness

- Include Unified Command delegations in local emergency operations plans and interagency/mutual-aid agreements.
- Conduct training exercises using Unified Command with adjacent jurisdictions and functional agencies.



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Visual 3.31

**Visual Description:** Unified Command and Preparedness

### Key Points

In order for Unified Command to be used successfully, it is important that agencies and jurisdictions prepare to use it. Preparation can be achieved in the following ways:

- Include Unified Command in local operations plans. It is recommended that Unified Command structures and agency responsibilities in local areas be included in local emergency operations plans and interagency mutual-aid agreements.
- Train often as a team. It is important to routinely conduct training and exercises in Unified Command with adjacent jurisdictions and functional agencies. Incident Commanders who work and train together in all types of situations will better adapt to incidents managed under Unified Command, thus helping to ensure a successful outcome.

Training includes being knowledgeable about ICS and Unified Command. It is essential to understand how ICS Unified Command functions. Knowledge of ICS principles and structure will enable managers to accept and easily adapt to a Unified Command mode of operation when it is required. Lack of knowledge about ICS can limit the willingness of some jurisdictions or agencies to participate in a Unified Command incident organization. It is impossible to implement Unified Command unless agencies have agreed to participate in the process.



### Advantages of Unified Command (1 of 2)

Now that you've learned more about Unified Command . . .

What are the advantages of using Unified Command?

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Visual 3.32

**Visual Description:** Advantages of Unified Command (1 of 2)

### Key Points

Answer the following question:



What are the advantages of using Unified Command?



### **Advantages of Unified Command (2 of 2)**

- One set of incident objectives
- Collective approach to strategies
- Improved information flow
- Mutual understanding of priorities and restrictions
- Agency authority not compromised
- Awareness of others' tactics
- Combined efforts are optimized
- Duplicate efforts/resources reduced or eliminated

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Visual 3.33

**Visual Description:** Advantages of Unified Command (2 of 2)

### **Key Points**

The advantages of using Unified Command include:

- One set of objectives is developed for the entire incident.
- A collective approach is made to developing strategies to achieve incident goals.
- Information flow and coordination is improved between all jurisdictions and agencies involved in the incident.
- All agencies with responsibility for the incident have an understanding of one another's priorities and restrictions.
- No agency's authority or legal requirements will be compromised or neglected.
- Each agency is fully aware of the plans, actions, and constraints of all others.
- The combined efforts of all agencies are optimized as they perform their respective assignments under a single Incident Action Plan.
- Duplicative efforts are reduced or eliminated, thus reducing cost and chances for frustration and conflict.

## Topic

## Applied Exercise



## Applied Exercise: School Bus Accident



**Visual Description:** Applied Exercise: School Bus Accident

### Key Points

Exercise Introduction:

- The scenario involves a school bus accident on a highway that is the boundary between two political jurisdictions.
- The exercise applies the key learning points and the objectives for this unit.



## Exercise Instructions

### Instructions:

1. Working as a team, review the scenario, scenario map, and resource list in your Student Manuals.
2. Assuming that a Unified Command will be established, complete the following steps:
  - List who would be included in the Unified Command structure.
  - Describe the challenges facing the Unified Command.
  - Describe the strategies the Unified Command structure will use to address these challenges and facilitate information flow and coordination.
3. Select a spokesperson and be prepared to present your work in 30 minutes.

Unit 3:  
Unified Command

Visual 3.35

**Visual Description:** Exercise Instructions

## Key Points

Refer to the following page for instructions on completing this activity.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this activity is to provide you with an opportunity to apply what you have learned about Unified Command to an incident involving a school bus accident on a highway separating two political jurisdictions.

**Instructions:** Follow the steps below to complete this activity:

1. Working as a team, review the scenario, map, and resource list.
2. Complete the following steps:
  - List who would be included in the Unified Command structure.
  - Describe the challenges facing the Unified Command.
  - Describe the strategies the Unified Command structure will use to address these challenges and facilitate information flow and coordination.

**Scenario:**

- Exciting Days Amusement Park lies within a heavily populated area of the State of New Jersey. This park is located one mile south of a major interstate highway on Route 537, a four-lane roadway that also serves as the border between Ocean and Monmouth Counties. Millstone Township lies to the north (Monmouth County), and Jackson and Plumsted Townships to the south (Ocean County). Ocean and Monmouth Counties are heavily populated with single family homes. Many of the residents commute long distances to a major city for employment.
- It is late afternoon on a warm weekday in mid May. Traffic on Route 537 is heavy in both directions due to commuter traffic traveling southbound returning home from work and northbound traffic exiting the amusement park.
- A tanker, heading north on Route 537, suddenly loses control and crosses the center divider. It strikes headfirst into a southbound school bus containing grammar school students that has just exited the park. The driver of the tanker is killed instantly as is the bus driver. After the impact, the tanker swerves across the southbound lanes of Route 537 and overturns. The bus comes to rest in a ditch on the shoulder of the highway. Liquid sulfur begins leaking from the tanker.
- Other vehicles are struck by the tanker as it swerves across the roadway. Several cars and another school bus cannot stop in time to avoid striking the damaged bus in the northbound lanes.
- Children in the first six rows of the first school bus are injured, some critically, and numerous injuries are reported in the second bus and automobiles that are involved in the collision.
- Traffic on Route 537 is brought to a standstill. The accident also affects the interstate highway hindering traffic flow on that roadway and blocking the exits to Route 537.
- The several thousand vehicles that remain inside the Exciting Days parking area are also trapped as exits from that facility are blocked as well.
- The emergency operations plans indicate that a unified command structure will be established where county jurisdictions overlap.



**Topic****Applied Exercise****Weather:**

80 degrees and cloudy, heavy thunderstorms are predicted for late afternoon.

**Resources:****Law Enforcement:**

Jackson Police	10 units
Plumsted Police	2 units
State Police	7 units

**Fire:**

Jackson District 1	2 engine companies
Jackson District 2	1 rescue company
	1 engine company
Jackson District 3	1 engine company
	2 brush trucks
Millstone Fire	1 engine company
	1 truck
Plumsted	1 engine company

Monmouth County Haz Mat team

**EMS:**

Monmouth Co.	7 BLS units
Monmouth Co.	2 ALS units
Ocean Co.	5 BLS units
Ocean Co.	5 ALS units (nontransport)
EMS Supervisor	1 Supervisor

**State Police:**

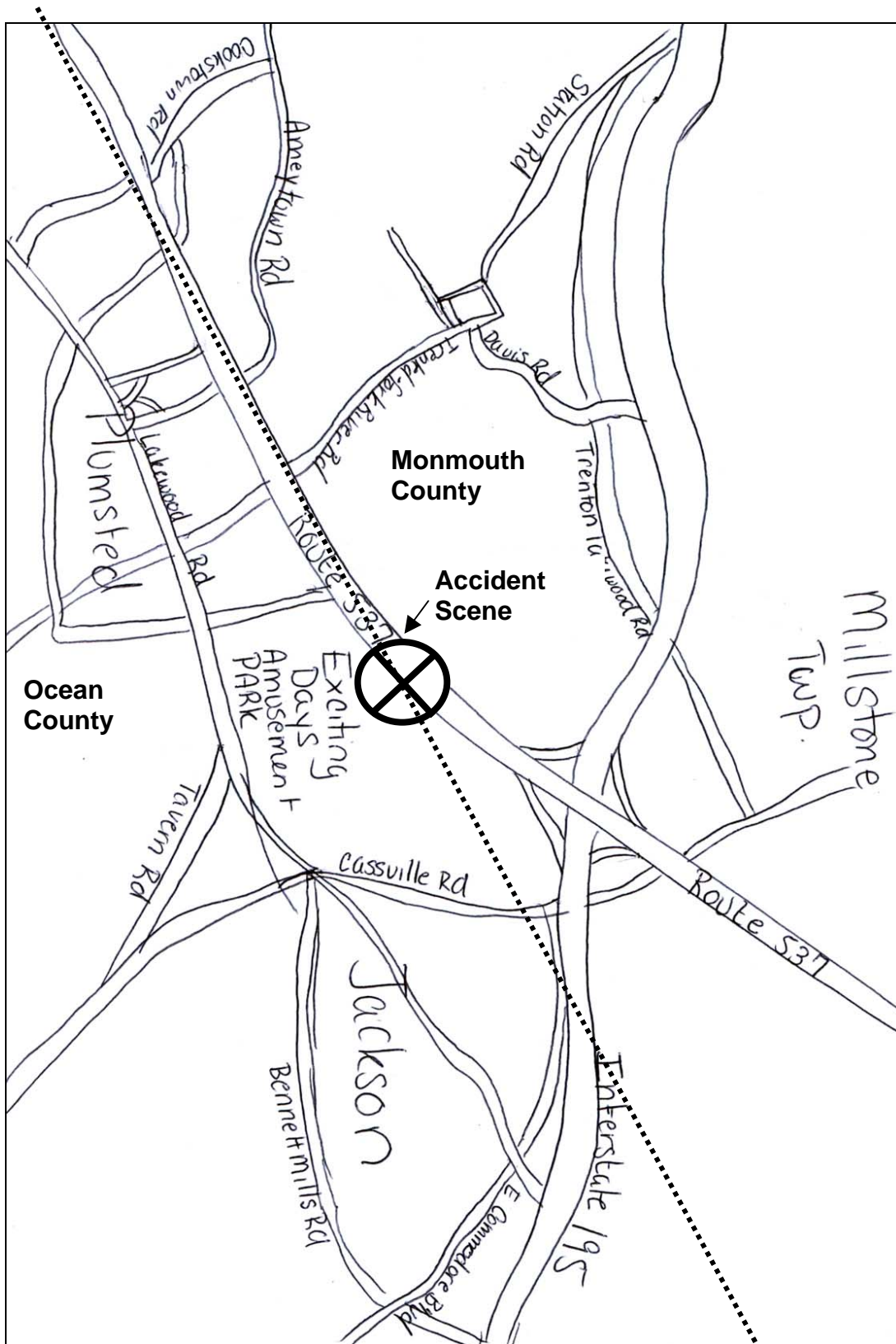
Medivac	1 Helicopter
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**Public Works:**

Highway Engineer Ocean County  
2 commercial wreckers  
6 light wreckers  
3 5-ton dump trucks  
Sign boards

**Critical Issues Facing Responders:**

- Rescue and extrication
- On-scene critical care
- Triage and transport
- Hazardous materials incident
- Traffic gridlock
- Traffic diversion
- Accident investigation
- Hazardous material cleanup
- Reopen roadway

Map:



## Summary

Are you now able to:

- Define and identify the primary features of Unified Command?
- Describe how Unified Command functions on a multijurisdiction or multiagency incident?
- List the advantages of Unified Command?
- Given a simulated situation, demonstrate roles and reporting relationships under a Unified Command that involves agencies within the same jurisdiction and under multijurisdiction conditions?

Unit 3:  
Unified Command

Visual 3.36

**Visual Description:** Summary

## Key Points

Are you now able to:

- Define and identify the primary features of Unified Command?
- Describe how Unified Command functions on a multijurisdiction or multiagency incident?
- List the advantages of using Unified Command?
- Given a simulated situation, demonstrate roles and reporting relationships under a Unified Command that involves agencies within the same jurisdiction and under multijurisdiction conditions?

**Your Notes**